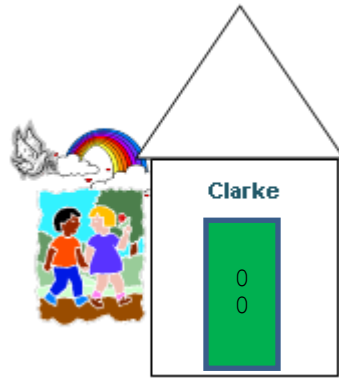


# INTEGRATED PRESCHOOL

SEPTEMBER 2016



We're Going Back To School



Parent Information

**PRESCHOOL**

**HANDBOOK**

## THE CLARKE INTEGRATED PRESCHOOL PROGRAM (July 2016)

The Clarke Integrated Preschool was started in September 1975, while the Clarke School for the Deaf was founded in 1867 as the first school in the country to teach deaf children to communicate through spoken language. In 2010, Clarke adopted a new title, Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech, which explicitly describes the ongoing mission to provide children who are deaf and hard of hearing with the listening, learning and spoken language skills they need to succeed.

The Integrated Preschool Program in Northampton is designed first as a developmentally appropriate preschool to meet the cognitive, language, social-emotional and motor needs of children who are three and four years old. In addition, it meets the audiological, educational, and communication needs of children of the same age who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. The Integrated Preschool Program is housed in the Family Center (Bell Hall) on the Clarke campus in Northampton, MA. The Family Center, which opened in 2006, consolidates outreach programs in audiological services, comprehensive evaluations, mainstream services, and early childhood education. In August 2012, the K-8 program co-located within a wing of the Leeds Elementary School, a school within the Northampton Public Schools, and continues to operate as a private school with the same mission of meeting the listening, language and learning needs of children with hearing loss. The Integrated Preschool Program continues to be housed in Bell Hall at 45 Round Hill Road in Northampton.

The "reverse-mainstreamed" program of the preschool provides all children, regardless of their hearing status, with the benefits of the small teacher/student ratio, experienced and highly-trained staff, the classical developmental curriculum, and focus on spoken language and pre-literacy, in a family-centered program. Careful attention is given to the physical, social, and acoustic aspects of the classroom environment.

Over the years the Clarke preschool program has served as an international model for developmentally appropriate intervention for young children with hearing loss and their hearing peers by responding to individual, family, community, educational and political needs. The preschool program has adapted to evolving needs in recent years by offering a flexible number of classrooms, increasing staff to child ratios, expanding the length of the day and school year (since 2004) for students with hearing loss, and servicing some preschool children in mainstream settings with itinerant teachers. Since the 1990's, the Clarke organization has expanded to include early childhood programs on additional campuses along the east coast of the United States. The Integrated Preschool Program in Northampton is licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). A Policy and Procedures manual is kept on site in the reception area and offices of the President and Director and is available to parents and school systems. Clarke Schools also maintains membership in the Option Schools (a private consortium of schools providing a listening and spoken language option for children with hearing loss

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### ADMISSION

The criterion for admission of children with educationally significant hearing loss includes: Parental commitment to using an auditory-oral approach, established pre-linguistic or early language skills, access to the sounds of spoken language (through use of a sensory device), average capacity for non-verbal cognitive development, and ability to engage interactively (non-verbally) in a social context. Placements made by public schools or agencies require a written contract and Individual Education Plan.

Criteria for admission of typically -hearing children is readiness for a daily structured group environment and typical development.

All children are screened for appropriate placement in the Integrated Preschool Program. Initially, parents are invited to visit the school to observe and gather information about the program. An admission screening is then scheduled for the child and family. The purpose of the screening is to establish a child readiness and the

appropriateness of the setting. Typically, this screening consists of a play-based cognitive assessment, a speech and language screening, a visit to the classroom, review of records including all previous service providers (e.g., evaluations by early intervention agencies, evaluations, educational plans and progress reports completed by public schools, audiological and health care providers), and parent interview. Health care records must include documentation of a physical exam by a licensed physician with the last 12 months, and up-to-date immunizations. Admission screenings are completed with participation by the director and designated specialists. The director or designee is available to meet with parents or public school to further explain the program's purpose, services and policies. During admission interviews, interested parties are made aware of policies and procedures for student and parent rights, health care procedures, protection of student records, and procedures for termination or referral if the program is found to be inappropriate for a student's individual needs.

Students with limited English proficiency, who also have a significant hearing loss, may or may not be proficient in the language of their home culture. Such students may be accepted into the preschool program. Students with this unique combination of needs will be assessed for language proficiency in spoken English, and collaborative efforts will be made with the LEA to assess proficiency in the language of the home. Because children with hearing loss have unique needs for auditory and linguistic access the Individual Education Plans will, with parental agreement, specify that the primary goal will be for the child to develop proficiency in spoken English, which is the primary language of instruction. English language learners (ELLs) will be provided the same opportunities to access and participate in the program's services, activities and other benefits as all other students.

### **The Educational Program and Curriculum (7.1)**

The content and implementation of curriculum in the Integrated Preschool Program is structured around developmentally appropriate concepts, activities and topics that relate to the individual children, their family cultures and the cultural community. The program incorporates curriculum and practices as outlined in the Massachusetts Early Childhood Standards and Guidelines for preschool experiences (part of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks). Specific areas of content include guided learning in English Language Arts, mathematics, science and technology, history and social sciences, motor and neurosensory development. Music, art and practical life skills are planned as well. All areas of the curricula are reflected in daily and weekly lesson plans and posted in the classrooms. The format of Individual Education Plans reflects all areas of the curriculum so that the linguistic development of children with hearing loss is addressed globally in content areas. Curriculum planning includes collaboration between the classroom teachers, assistants and speech and language specialists to ensure integrated instruction. Curriculum is communicated to parents in a weekly newsletter, as well as through each child's Home-School notebook.

### **The PHYSICAL SPACE**

The Integrated Preschool Program is located at 45 Round Hill Road, in the Family Center (Bell Hall) on the Clarke campus in Northampton, MA. The center consolidates outreach programs in audiological services, comprehensive evaluations, mainstream services, and early childhood education. There are welcoming, easily accessible spaces for children and their families, and meeting areas for conferences.

Two preschool classrooms on the second level of the building are easily viewed by a large observation room. In addition, there are "Focus Rooms" where children work individually with teachers of the deaf on listening and spoken language goals. Each instructional area is equipped with observation and acoustical accommodations (e.g., wall treatments, carpeting, lowered ceilings and group amplification equipment as needed) to optimize the listening environment. The preschool library is located in an alcove between the two classrooms, and each classroom has a reading or library interest area. Resources available include age-appropriate fiction and nonfictional books, a computer, and ipads.

Additional rooms include: a multi-purpose room that is used for rest periods, individual and small group instructions and therapies; a preschool library and curriculum resource room, a fully equipped and sound-treated kitchen for cooking activities and lunch, and a large multi-purpose room that is used for special functions and indoor recess when necessary, and bathrooms for children, toileting trainees, and adults.

An outdoor play area includes a large grassy area with shade and sun. The fenced area contains a climbing structure and swings (each with a soft fall zone of wood chips), and sandbox, playhouse, and basketball. For summertime, an additional canopy and water source is available. A storage shed allows easy access to a variety of equipment that is rotated for engagement in a range of individual and cooperative physical activities (e.g., balls, parachutes, push and pull toys, goalies, swimming pools, rakes and shovels, riding toys).

### THE PRESCHOOL STAFF

We are fortunate to have a very professional, creative, and committed staff at the Preschool, which consists of:

*The Director of Child and Family Services*, has advanced degrees in both child development and education of the deaf, is responsible for all outreach programs in the center and consults to the early intervention programs on all Clarke campuses.

*The Director of Early Childhood Services*, with advanced degrees and experience regular education and education of the deaf is the immediate supervisor of the preschool staff.

*The Classroom Teachers*, typically with graduate degrees in education of the deaf and early childhood education, are responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the classroom. The teacher coordinates curriculum planning and parent communication and writes educational reports for each child.

*The Assistant Teachers* in the classrooms are experienced in early childhood education and share in curriculum planning, classroom set-up, and parent communication.

*The Communication Teachers* partner with the classroom teachers in providing auditory, speech, and language work in the classroom and in individual work with the children with hearing loss, and also assist in curriculum planning, and provide written progress reports on auditory, speech and language development for the children with hearing loss. The communication specialists are trained either as Teachers of the Deaf or Speech-Language Pathologists.

*Teachers-in-Training* may be part of the classroom. Interns are accepted from area colleges and universities in the field of education, special education, early childhood, communication disorders, audiology and other relevant areas. *The Office Manager* answers and directs your phone calls, types, makes copies, files, and generally keeps everything running smoothly.

#### Affiliated Consultants:

Educational audiologists are available to the program through the Clarke Hearing Center near the main entrance of Bell Hall and are available to the preschool for management of sensory devices, hearing evaluations each semester (or more if necessary), tympanometry as needed, orders and repairs on sensory equipment as needed, monitoring for cochlear implant candidacy, and consultation with parents and teachers. Hearing screenings are available for all children with parental consent.

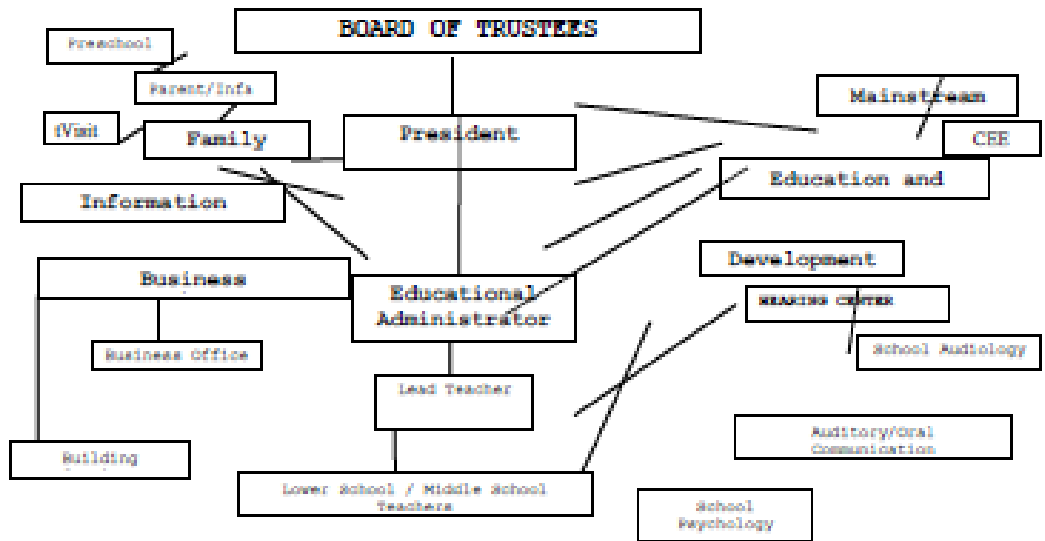
The Integrated Preschool consults with a team of medical professionals (a *registered nurse and pediatrician*) on health care policies and procedures and maintenance of records. Staff are also trained and certified in emergency first aid and CPR. (See the Integrated Preschool Health Care Policy Manual for full details).

The *school psychologist*, who has experience with children with hearing loss and early childhood, is consulted as needed. In addition to providing psychological evaluations, the school psychologist offers guidance to the staff and families in dealing with particular classroom situations or sometimes offers direct therapy to a child when the teachers and parents feel that is required.

Children who need occupational, physical or other therapies may receive services on-site at the preschool through contract with other service providers or agencies.

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# Organizational Chart of Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech



## ATTENDANCE:

Regular attendance is *essential* for each child's successful adjustment and progress in preschool. Please call the Preschool Office Manager (413-582-1116) between 8:00 a.m.- 9:30a.m.when your child is absent to let us know the reason. It is particularly important to notify the Preschool when your child has a contagious illness, so that we can let other parents know about possible exposure as necessary. Daily attendance is documented and shared with public school systems at report periods.

School holidays are listed on the Clarke Preschool Calendar. Events and dismissals that are relevant only to the early childhood departments are reminded in the weekly newsletter, "The Preschool Post," which is sent home each Friday in your child's backpack.

## PRESCHOOL SCHEDULES

### WEEKLY Schedule

#### Group A: Children with Hearing Loss:

Monday through Thursday: 8:25 a.m.- 2:25 p.m.

Fridays: 8:25 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

#### Group B: Children with Typical Hearing:

Monday through Friday: 9:15 a.m.- 11:45 a.m.

### DAILY SCHEDULE

- 8:25 a.m. Children who have hearing loss arrive. (Please see the Preschool Parent Handbook for arrival procedures).
- 8:30 a.m. Children take off their coats, hang backpacks, and take out their home-school notebooks, go to the bathroom, wash hands, and participate in morning device and listening checks. Music and Movement or choice activities, Pre-teaching and individual lessons begin.
- 9:15 a.m. Children with typical hearing arrive and enter the classroom as a group. They take off coats, take out home-school notebooks, go to the bathroom, and wash hands.
- 9:30 **All children** assemble for a large community group.
- 10:00 a.m. Group snack
- 10:15 a.m. Children participate in guided small group and individual activities and lessons with teachers in the classroom. Throughout the morning, children with hearing loss will spend time working outside of the classroom with staff.
- 11:00 a.m. Large group activity/lesson.
- 11:15 a.m. - 11:45 Children are supervised for outside playtime.
- 11:45 a.m. Dismissal or transition to lunch. Children with typical hearing are dismissed to parents from the main preschool entrance (the door with the flag).

### Afternoon Schedule for Children with Hearing Loss

- 11:50 a.m. Children (with hearing loss) come inside from the playground to use the bathroom and wash hands.
- 12:00-12:30 p.m. Children eat lunch in the preschool kitchen with adult facilitation of conversation.
- 12:30-1:00 p.m. Small Group Lessons
- 1:00-1:45 p.m. Rest time. Children have quiet time or nap on cots, or individual sessions.
- 1:45-2:00 p.m. Bathroom and snack
- 2:00-2:15 Language Review of the day
- 2:15-2:25 p.m. Dismissal. Children are escorted to their bus or guardian.

### Fridays:

- 8:25 a.m. Arrival
- 11:45 a.m. Hearing peers are dismissed
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch
- 12:30 p.m. Dismissal
- Afternoon Family consults, Staff meetings, planning and set-up

\*Please note that the daily schedule is adjusted to suit the needs of individuals and the group. Revised July 2013

## ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

The Preschool doors open at 8:25 a.m. for the children with hearing loss, and 9:15 a.m. for the typically hearing children. (Teachers are meeting and preparing the classrooms for the children from 8:00 a.m.-8:20 a.m.) It is important that ALL children *arrive promptly* so that the daily schedule can be followed and your child does not miss the carefully planned routines and activities.

### Morning Entrance Routine

**NOTICE:** *Please be prompt* in bringing your child to school. Tardiness disrupts carefully planned schedules and activities, and stresses the child.

1. Group A Children (who are deaf or hard of hearing) arrive at 8:25 a.m. each morning by bus or private transportation. They are greeted by a preschool teacher at the pull-in area of the driveway at the south end of the Bell Hall (between the Gables House and Bell Hall).
2. The teacher and/or parent escorts children up the sidewalk to the front preschool entrance (designated by a seasonal flag). A teacher greets at the door and accompanies children down a half-flight of stairs to the preschool wing. (In inclement weather, entrance to the rear door may be used and children go up one flight of stairs).
3. Teachers help children remove coats, backpacks and boots and hang them in their cubby. Home-school notebooks are put in the classroom basket (located next to their classroom door). Home-packed lunches are placed into a refrigerator.
4. Before entering the classroom, children are guided by staff to use the toilet and wash hands.
5. A preschool teacher guides children to their classroom and begins planned activities.
6. Children who arrive late (later than 8:35 a.m.) need to be escorted to the main entrance of Bell Hall by their transporter. Bus carriers who cannot leave their bus may call the preschool (413-582-1116) to alert a teacher to come to retrieve the child from the bus.
7. Group B Children (who do not have hearing loss) arrive by private transportation and are greeted by a teacher at the preschool entrance (designated by the seasonal flag) at 9:15 a.m., or, caregivers may escort children to their cubbies. Any child who arrives later than 9:20 will need to be escorted to the preschool wing by their guardian. All Group B children will proceed through the same entrance routines described above in numbers 4-6.

### Pick-Up Routines

NOTICE: Always notify a teacher if someone other than a parent will be picking up your child or if you will be taking another child home with you. Written permission must be provided for staff to release your child to anyone other than the adults designated on your preschool information form.

#### Dismissal of Group A (Children with Hearing Loss)

##### 2:30 p.m. Dismissals (Monday -Thursdays) and 12:30 p.m Dismissals (Fridays)

1. Children will be dismissed from the preschool classrooms to their cubbies (on Fridays the children may go directly from the lunchroom to their cubbies). Home-school notebooks and personal belongings will be zipped into backpacks, and outerwear will be put on.
2. Two preschool teachers will escort children up the half-flight of stairs and out the preschool entrance (designated by seasonal flag).
3. Children will be escorted down the sidewalk to their bus.
4. Children who are picked up by guardians will also be escorted down the sidewalk to their caregiver, or parents may pick up their child at the preschool door. When the weather is bad, guardians should come to the preschool entrance to pick-up their child.

#### Dismissals for Group B (Hearing Children) at 11:45 a.m. Monday -Friday

During dismissal, guardians may park in the preschool bus drop-off area at the south end of Bell Hall behind the Gables building. If at outdoor recess, children will be dismissed to their caregiver from the playground gate. Caregivers should park their car in the bus drop-off area and walk to the playground gate. If the weather does not permit outdoor recess, children will be escorted to the top of the stairs next to the main preschool entrance

(designated by the seasonal flag). Guardians will meet their child at this entrance. Teachers will dismiss children to pre-approved guardians.

### **CANCELLATION POLICY for Inclement Weather**

The Integrated Preschool will be delayed or closed when Northampton Public Schools delay or cancel school because of bad weather.

Cancellations can be determined by checking local websites, listening to local radio and television stations and looking for delays or cancellations of Northampton Public Schools. If in doubt, you may call the Early Childhood Office at 413-582-1116. We will make an effort to leave an outgoing notice of Preschool delays or cancellations by 7:00 a.m.

Cancelled days are typically rescheduled for June.

### **BUS TRANSPORTATION**

Children who are placed in the preschool through a public school system may be transported by a school bus or van. Teachers have experience with this transition and will have suggestions for preparing your child to ride the bus. Please keep the following in mind:

- If your child is bussed back and forth to the school, contact the school department and the bus company several days before school starts to make arrangements and determine pick-up and drop-off times.
- If possible, arrange a time before the first day of school for the bus driver to come to your house and meet you and your child. Make arrangements for required car seats as needed.
- Drivers are given a "Bus Driver's form" from the Preschool which is collected by teachers during the first week of school.
- Please remember to notify the bus driver or the transportation company directly if you need to cancel bus transportation for a day.
- A child may not ride on another bus unless the driver has received a written permission signed by the parent.

### **REST TIME**

Rest time is required and provided for full day students for 45 minutes during which children may sleep or rest. Individual cots are provided for rest time, and children bring their own bedding. Bedding is sent home for laundering monthly or more frequently if needed (for accidents while sleeping etc.) and may also be washed at school if staff time permits.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips take place throughout the school year and are announced up to a week or few days in advance, depending upon the amount of preparation required. Field trips may be on-campus, within walking distance, or at driving distance. For off-campus field trips, preschool staff will drive a CLARKE school van or a rental van if available. School vans are insured and maintained for safety, and teachers must have a current license on file and go through a training in order to transport children. Parent drivers may also be necessary to transport children. A general permission slip allowing your child to participate in field trips should be returned prior to the beginning of the school year. We encourage parents to come on field trips with us. Parents sometimes car-pool and follow the van to the meeting place. **Parents must provide car seats or booster seats as required by law in order for children to ride to field trips.**

### **CLOTHING**

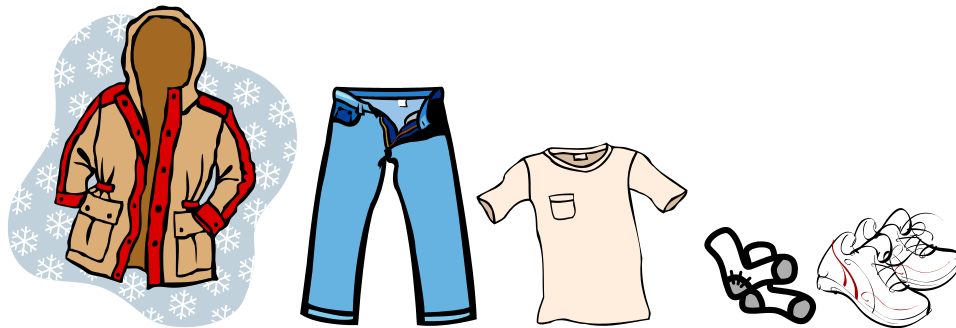
Children should *wear play clothes* to Preschool. Many of the activities in the Preschool curriculum are messy, and even when wearing aprons the children are likely to get dirty. Preschool children also need clothes that allow independence in dressing. Snaps and sturdy zippers are easier than over-size or very small buttons. Overalls and body suits are often difficult for a child to undo. Practical shoes are encouraged.



Please send a *complete set of extra clothes* to leave at school. Include underwear, socks, shirts, and pants all clearly labeled with your child's name. Please remember to replace these clothes as your child uses them and as seasons change. "Accidents" are common in Preschool and children feel more secure when they have a fresh change of clothing of their own. Should your child run out of spare clothing we have some extra clothes at the Preschool which may be borrowed. Please launder and return them as soon as possible.

We do go outside daily in good weather. Children should be dressed appropriately for the weather. We stay inside when it is below 20 degrees F. or when it is raining. If you are buying new boots and snow clothes for your child, please choose them with an eye for independence in dressing (e.g., mittens instead of gloves, Velcro-fastened boots and hats). If your child wears shoe-boots during the winter, slippers or sneakers may be left at school to wear during class. For safety reasons, we do insist that all children wear some kind of shoe or slipper in the Preschool.

During the summer session, we encourage parents to send children to school in shoes that provide protection to the toes. Children should have sunscreen applied at home daily. For water play, please send a swimsuit to remain at school, a towel, and flip flops or water shoes, and a sun hat.



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### **BRINGING THINGS FROM HOME**

We discourage children from bringing their own toys to Preschool, as they may be lost, misplaced, or broken. In addition, it is often difficult for Preschool children to share their special possessions. We will have periodic "sharing" times when children can bring special things from home and tell the other children about what they have brought at group time. You will be notified of the day for "sharing" or "Show and Tell" through the newsletter.

However, sometimes children need a "transitional object" to comfort them in the transition from home to school. This is especially true of those children who ride a bus to and from school. A book, a favorite stuffed animal, a photo of the family or a blanket, or muffins to share could all serve as a "transitional object" to comfort your child during the ride from home to school, and as they enter a group setting. We will guide children to keep transitional objects in their cubby during class time. Parents can help by assuring the child that it's fine to take a reminder of home to school, but that it will stay in their cubby during class time.

## CHILDREN'S ADJUSTMENT TO PRESCHOOL



Young children respond in many different ways to the start of school. The transition from home to school is very significant and may be stressful even when it is looked forward to and well planned, and even if a child is returning to school. Effects of this stress may be observed in a child's behavior, and may be considered normal and healthy. Some children may cry when they leave home or at drop off or pick-up time, others may revert to earlier behaviors, such as bed-wetting or baby talk, and others may simply refuse to talk about school with their parents. It is helpful to be patient and supportive of your child's feelings and to tell teachers about any changes you notice in your child's behavior at home. If such behaviors persist beyond 6 weeks, please consult with teachers.

In the classroom, children adjust individually to being in a group with other preschool children. Some children join the group right away, seem comfortable from the start and never seem to have separation problems. Other children may seem to adjust easily at first, but show signs of stress after up to 6 weeks later. Other children may need to observe for several weeks or even months before they feel comfortable joining group play. We try to make this transition as smooth as possible for your child and let families know how your child is adjusting through frequent notes and phone calls during the first weeks of school. The teacher may have suggestions on how to help with your child's adjustment and daily transitions.

Children often feel comforted when a teacher knows about his/her home life. We suggest that you help your child to communicate about home events by sending regular notes and pictures in the home-school notebook. Stress due to school entrance can be reduced when your child senses that his or her family and the staff are well-connected. This is one reason we do home-visits. Young children are just developing an understanding of the connections to their own experiences, and the details you provide about your child's experience at home can equip the staff with a means to comfort your child. Details such as the names of siblings, pets, favorite stuffed animals, comforting routines, and special or unique events can allow staff to sooth a child in transition.

We also recognize that the separation of a child from his/her parents is filled with emotion for the parents. The beginning of school is especially difficult for those parents who will be separated from their child on a regular basis for the first time. Please feel that you may be as open with the teachers about expressing your feelings as you feel comfortable. You are welcome to telephone and check on how your child is doing anytime. We also suggest that after saying good-bye to your child you come around to the observation booth so that you can see your child in the classroom. Please let us know how we can help you and your child make this transition as smooth as possible. You are encouraged to come to the school as often as possible, but at least one time per week.

### Parents Welcome!

Coffee for Parents/Guardians is available on the first day of school, and the observation booth as well as the Preschool Dining Area is available as an opportunity to meet other parents who may be experiencing similar feelings and concerns.

## **Behavior Management**

The preschool years are all about learning, and this guides our policies on behavior management. When children "act out," our policy is to observe the behavior as information about what the child needs in terms of care and guidance. Children are guided to identify their feelings, the feelings of others, and verbally express their

needs and desires. Interactions with peers are facilitated as children learn to self-regulate, negotiate, and engage in cooperative activities. The curriculum directly supports such learning through literature, song, and direct teaching. Parents of preschoolers are often concerned about their child's social behavior, and the preschool staff consults with and keeps parents informed of any concerns and coordinate strategies for guiding children through issues. The Clarke school psychologist is consulted as needed.



## Regulated Policies

The DESE requires that the program address very specific criterion with policies regarding use of separation of students ("time out"), runaway students, use of restraint, and bullying.

The preschool policy regarding *student separation* is: At the preschool level, children are at no times left unsupervised or alone as a result of separation from a group or activity. On occasions when behavioral guidance necessitates nonparticipation in an activity, a child may be guided to a nearby area with the accompaniment of an adult. The adult ensures the safety of the child and an explanation of behavior necessary to re-enter the group. If the child is not able to re-enter the group activity, an adult remains within view of the child.

The policy regarding *runaways* is: Preschool students are three-to-five years of age and directly supervised by an adult at all times while they are at school. They are greeted by an adult upon their arrival to school, and are escorted into and from the school building or classroom. Throughout the day, children are accompanied by an adult to various settings within the school (for example, they are accompanied to the bathroom, to other instructional rooms, and to the playground). Children are directly instructed on appropriate boundaries and rules of safety, and opportunities for appropriate independence. Children learn to stay within instructional settings unless guided otherwise by an adult. The playground is surrounded by a gated four-foot high fence, and children are supervised while outside. If at any time a child should digress or run from a group gathering or instructional setting, planning includes sufficient staff for supervision (e.g., in a classroom, or on the playground so that an adult may leave the group to retrieve the child.) A child who runs toward danger or out of a supervised area would be followed and guided back to the group.

The policy regarding *use of physical restraint* in preschool follows the criteria of the Clarke elementary and middle school programs (see expanded version in the K-8 handbook), and is also adapted for age-appropriate application. At the preschool level, the issue of restraint is one that is reflected upon frequently and carefully. Young children often require physical assistance, and may even need to be carried to safety at times. However, the staff is reminded at yearly trainings and throughout the year that restraint is defined very differently from escorting. A child is not held or picked up and moved against their will unless they are in or causing immediate risk of danger. Children may be held at their will for comfort and care only when necessary and with consideration given to their individual developmental needs for security as well as autonomy/independence.

A Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is also required and staff participate in annual professional development on this topic. The staff is consistently focused on promoting emotional awareness, and respectful and positive interactions among students. Instruction is integrated into all parts of the daily routine, and targeted also through the responsive part of the curriculum as well as through use of evidence-based social-emotional curriculum (Woven Word Pre/K, and Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum (preschool-8<sup>th</sup> grades) as well as teacher-

selected materials. Topics are addressed in class groups facilitated by teachers of the deaf and/or the school psychologist during Social Emotional Learning sessions. Parents are included in instructional goals and objectives through use of home-school notebooks and curriculum notes/newsletters.

The preschool generally considers *suspension* from school an inappropriate action for a three-to-five year old child who is in need of guidance to learn self-regulation. If a preschool student displays behavior that is maladjusted (e.g., excessive crying, aggression, or noncompliance), these are typically considered indications that the child may:

- a.) not be ready for or need adjustments in the structures of the school environment, or
- (b.) be under undue stress in one of his/her environments, or
- (c.) may be in need of evaluation for (additional) special needs

In such cases, the primary action of preschool staff is to gently and consistently provide the child with a safe and reassuring environment, address immediate physical and emotional needs, and consult with the child's parents and school psychologist. The educational team would consult on the necessity of a behavior and adjustment plan, and/or referrals. Parent conferences would be arranged to discuss possible indications of the child's behaviors, and a plan of action agreed upon.

*Termination* of a preschool child would occur only as a result of a team (staff, administration, the LEA, and parents) decision, based upon the indication that the Clarke Integrated Preschool program was not appropriate to meet the child's current needs. In these circumstances, referral to a more appropriate program and a transition plan would be agreed upon.

Current special education laws such as 1997 Amendments made to the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) afford clear guidelines on protection to students with disabilities who display behavioral problems through the individual educational plan team process. Student behaviors that require "disciplinary" action, or impede the child's learning, require that the team convene within ten days and formulate a *functional behavioral assessment* (FBA) and *behavior intervention plan*. Formal behavioral observations may also be used for a range of child behaviors that are of developmental concern, and not necessarily disruptive.

Overall, the program strives to support children in their developing social skills and self-regulation, and nurture a happy child who feels a sense of responsibility and belonging, and loves to learn!



## NUTRITION

The food consumed in the Preschool is planned to be wholesome, natural, and nutritional as well as enjoyable. Mid-morning snack is provided every day. In the beginning of the year, the children usually have snack together at the same time. Teachers decide when the children have the skills necessary to prepare their own snack (to pour without spilling, to spread, to fold a napkin, etc.) to make food available for the children to eat snack whenever they want. Examples of snacks provided include: fruit, vegetables, cheese and crackers, cereal, or yogurt, and a choice of juice, milk or water to drink. There are times that we may ask families to provide snack, especially for special events. Please refrain from foods that have a high sugar content, food additives, or artificial coloring. If you send a snack for your child to share with peers, please remember to check with teachers first on any food to be avoided due to allergies (**e.g., no peanut butter**).

We encourage you to come to celebrate your child's birthday at school! If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday at school, please notify the teachers several days in advance. It will be your responsibility to send in a special snack such as fruit salad, cupcakes, muffins, doughnuts, cookies, or ice cream. Individual servings are much easier to serve than one large cake. We will take two photos of the birthday child, one for our birthday book and one to go home. Please do not send invitations for outside events to school with your child unless the *entire class* is invited to the party—we do not want any child to feel left out.

**In June 2011, the government introduced a simple image for nutritional planning with the plate above, divided into basic food groups. This campaign encourages people to make half their plate fruit and vegetables, and urges consumers to avoid oversized portions, enjoy their food but eat less of it and drink water instead of sugary drinks.**



For more information go to: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/health-and-nutrition-information>

## PRESCHOOL LUNCH PROTOCOL

Preschool students who attend full day **BRING A PACKED LUNCH FROM HOME**. They are served their **home-packed lunch** between 12:00 p.m. and 12:30 p.m. Children eat in the lunch room. Teachers eat with and assist children for a facilitated social meal. Handouts with nutritional information and ideas for packed lunches are provided to families prior to the start of school. We discourage parents from sending candy and sugary drinks and processed foods. Please pre-heat hot meals from home and send them in a thermos. Otherwise, nutritional cold lunches are suggested.

**FREE or Reduced BREAKFAST AND/OR LUNCH:** Please note that the Clarke preschool works in conjunction with the public school systems to ensure that each child has adequate nutrition available. School systems who place a child at Clarke are required to provide notification of any families who qualify for free breakfast or lunch meals. Families are also encouraged to alert Clarke preschool of such needs. Breakfast and

lunch will be provided for any child identified as in need by their publicly -funded sending school district. The program shall prepare and serve meals in a manner and amount appropriate to the nutritional needs of each student, including special dietary requirements, consistent with applicable state and federal regulations

**Please alert staff if your child has any food allergies, special diets or eating problems.** In the case of food allergies, the consulting nurse will be notified and notifications will be posted in the lunchroom in a discrete, not-public place for staff to consult.

**LUNCH PROTOCOL INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:**

1. Home-packed lunches are kept refrigerated in the lunchroom until served. Parents should send food that is already prepared and ready-to-eat. Hot foods should be sent in a thermos.
2. Children wash their hands in the preschool classroom wing and proceed to the lunchroom.
3. Children are seated at tables with an adult (preschool staff) at each table. Silverware and napkins are provided as needed.
4. Preschool teachers wash hands and use gloves to prepare, serve and/or assist children with their lunches. A microwave oven is available for heating food if necessary.
5. Beverages are served at the table. Milk, water and juice are available if not packed.
6. Children are encouraged to eat main meal items before dessert.
7. If a child forgets a lunch, children will be offered a nutritional meal with food that is kept on hand at the preschool (e.g, a sandwich, applesauce, yogurt, vegetables, fruit, cheese, chicken nuggets, hummous).
8. When finished eating, uneaten portions of the meal will be returned to the child's lunchbox so that parents may monitor what their child is eating.
9. Children proceed from the lunch room to the classrooms.
10. A staff member loads used dishes and silverware into the sanitizing dishwasher and runs the dishwasher.
11. Tables are sanitized daily by regular maintenance staff.
12. Please remember to empty and sanitize your child's lunchbox daily.

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## HEALTH POLICIES

In accordance with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the following policies are in place:

**No child who is ill may be brought to the Preschool. Our school policy is that a sick child, i.e., one who should not be at Preschool, demonstrates:**

- Vomiting
- Fever
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Pinworms
- Unexplained rash
- Complaints of sore throat, headache, stomach ache
- Persistent, bothersome cough
- Impetigo
- Diarrhea
- Any open sores, blisters, or fever blisters
- Frequent Itching of the Scalp (may indicate head lice)

**Also, a child must stay home at least 24 hours after the following:**

- A fever has broken
- Starting medication for impetigo
- Starting antibiotics for strep throat
- Starting medication for conjunctivitis

If, in the judgment of the staff and/or consulting nurse your child is not well enough to be at the Preschool, you will be called to pick up your child. If we cannot reach you, we will call the emergency contact person.

Please remember that infections spread easily in group environments. Consider the health of the other children, staff and parents and do not send a child who is not healthy to the Preschool. After an illness, a child returning to the Preschool should feel well enough to participate in all activities and daily routines (including outdoor play and field trips).

A child who is returning to school following a highly contagious illness is be required to have doctor's permission in writing. This is necessary to ensure that the child is no longer contagious, as well as for your child's health.

If a child has Herpes Simplex virus (cold sores), the open oozing sore must be covered, or the child should remain home until the sore has crusted over. In the case of head lice, a child should remain home until treated.

Children are required to wash hands when they enter school, after using the toilet, before eating, and if fingers or hands enter their mouths or noses, after handling any classroom pets, and after cleaning. Materials in the preschool are washed after use, or sooner if a child sneezes or puts their mouth on them. Equipment, materials and surfaces are sanitized daily.

## **PLAN FOR MEETING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF MILDLY ILL CHILD WHILE AT SCHOOL (7.11 (8) (19.4))**

Please be sure to **inform the staff** if you have given medication to your child before sending him/her to school *i.e., what the medicine is, how much and the time it was given*. This is important information for staff in case your child has a reaction to medication (or lack of) or needs medical treatment.

The Clarke Integrated Preschool program is not equipped to care for sick children, and our isolation policy outlines the procedures that is taken when a child becomes ill while at the School. However, there are times when children are tired, ill, upset, or are waiting to be picked up by their parent or emergency contact person. The procedure followed for meeting the needs of mildly ill children while in the care of the Clarke Integrated Preschool School is as follows:

1. Children who are tired or upset will be given a chance to rest in a quiet area of the School classroom. Close supervision is made possible by keeping the child in the classroom.
2. Children who are suspected as being ill, will be given a health appraisal by the Classroom Teacher. She will check for: general mood, activity level, fever, breathing difficulties, skin color, rashes, sores, swelling or bruises, severe coughing, and discharge from nose, eyes, and ears, and consider the possibility of common minor illnesses and symptoms: fevers, colds, nausea, diarrhea, rashes, constipation, sunburn, heat exhaustion and dehydration. .
3. Teachers and staff do not diagnose, but based on the child's symptoms, we will decide if the child should go home or rest for a short time. If a child complains of an earache, an attempt will be made to reach a managing audiologist to request a visual inspection of the ear in order to provide information to the parent or caregiver.
4. Each child will be made as comfortable as possible and individual needs will be met by the teacher.
5. If the decision has been made that the child's symptoms require that he/she be sent home, he/she will be removed from the room and given space in an appropriate early childhood area to wait for arrangements to be made for his/her going home. A staff person will stay with the child until his/her ride arrives. Food, drink, rest, and play materials will be provided to the child as needed.
6. If the decision is made that the child needs a rest, but does not need to be sent home, he/she will be monitored and allowed to participate in activities that he/she chooses to do. His/her parent will be notified of the child's need for a rest. If the child appears uncomfortable, or appears to be getting worse, then his/her parent will be called to pick him/her up.

### **EMERGENCY MEDICAL PLAN**

The emergency care of injuries shall be limited to simple first aid procedures. Preschool staff maintains certification in First Aid and CPR training. Parents must be notified of all injuries on the same day that the injury occurs. The procedure that Clarke Integrated Preschool Northampton follows when a child is injured at the School or on a field trip is as follows:

1. The teacher-in-charge is notified immediately of any injury to a child and first aid care begins.
2. The assistant teacher notifies the Director and/or administrative assistant.
3. The Director or administrative assistant calls the parents, or if the parents are unavailable, the emergency contact person is called.
4. When ambulance transportation is necessary, a staff person shall accompany the child if the parent is not able to do so.
5. All information concerning injury will be recorded on the appropriate forms and incident log within 24 hours. One copy of the injury report will be provided to the parents and one copy will be placed in the child's file. The injury report shall include any medical care administered to the child at school other than basic first aid. If required, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will also be notified.



## **TOILETING AND DIAPERING PROCEDURES AND INDIVIDUAL PLANS (14.3)**

Parents are encouraged to toilet train their preschool child before admission to the program. If a child has a medical or other developmental reason for delays in toilet training, we will work with families on a collaborative toilet-training program for individual children, which would be included in the child's Individual Education Plan. Parents will need to supply diapers or pull-ups and wet wipes for all children who are in transition to underwear.

Children who are in training are checked for soiled diapers upon arrival at school, mid-morning, before and after lunch, and after rest time. Staff uses a gentle and caring manner with children, being careful not to arouse feelings of shame when a child is soiled, but rather, reassuring them that their comfort is important. When changing diapers or soiled clothing, the following sanitation procedures are followed:

### **Sanitation and Hygiene Procedures for Diapering and Toileting**

- Each child's diaper is changed when wet or soiled.
- Supply of clean, dry diapers is maintained adequate to meet the needs of children.
- A disposable covering is used on changing surface which is of adequate size to prevent the child from coming in contact with changing surface and changed after each child has been diapered and disposed of in a closed container.
- Running water is adjacent to diaper in area for hand-washing.
- Staff wear disposable gloves during the diapering procedure (which are put on before handling a child's soiled clothing or diapers).
- Each child is washed and dried with individual washing materials during each diaper change. After changing, child's hands are washed with liquid soap and running water; hands are dried with individual or disposable towels.
- Changing surface is washed and disinfected after each use.
- Soiled disposable diapers and gloves are placed in a closed container that is lined with a leak proof disposable lining. These diapers are removed from the facility daily or more frequently if necessary.
- Soiled non-disposable diapers and soiled clothing are placed in an individual sealed, plastic container labeled with child's name and returned to child's parent at the end of the day.
- Staff wash their hands with liquid soap and running water and dry hands with individual or disposable towels after changing child's diaper or helping child with toileting.
- Changing surface is smooth, intact, and impervious to water and easily cleaned.
- Diapering areas and hand-washing facilities are separate from areas used for food preparation and food service. A common changing table or diapering surface is not used for any other purpose.

### **Tooth brushing Plan**

Preschool children are guided to brush teeth daily following lunch and before rest time.

The procedure is:

1. Individual toothbrushes are labeled and stored in a labeled plastic cup.
2. A teacher dispenses a small amount of toothpaste onto a paper towel.
3. Children are guided to:
  - a. Gather their toothbrush, toothpaste and disposable cup
  - b. Turn on water
  - c. Wet their toothbrush
  - d. Scoop up the toothpaste with their brush
  - e. Brush their teeth and tongue
  - f. Rinse their toothbrush
  - g. Rinse their mouth with a cup of water.
  - h. Turn off water
  - i. Throw away cup and paper towel
  - j. Return toothbrush to their labeled storage cup, brush up.

PLAN FOR MANAGING INFECTIOUS DISEASE (7.11(9))

A communicable disease is an illness that can be transmitted or spread from one person or animal to another. Contagious illnesses are one of the major problems that face schools. Understanding and managing infectious diseases is a paramount concern to Clarke Northampton Integrated Preschool staff. The plan for managing infectious disease includes:

1. **Prevention:** Prevention of illness is maintained by keeping the center clean, and the people clean, dry, and surrounded by fresh air. All surfaces in the school are cleaned and disinfected with a bleach and water or other approved solution. Children are taught to cough or sneeze toward the floor, or if possible, they should cough or sneeze into their elbow, or a tissue and then wash their hands. Hand-washing is perhaps the single most effective measure against the spread of communicable and infectious diseases in the school.

Universal precautions to prevent the spread of blood-borne infections like AIDS and hepatitis B. We avoid contact with all blood and body fluids, however, if we cannot avoid contact, we protect ourselves by wearing vinyl gloves; washing hands and other body parts that have come in contact with body fluids; and we discard or decontaminate anything that has had direct contact with blood or body fluids. These precautions are used with blood, any body fluid that has blood in it, and any clear fluid running from a child's nose or ears after a head injury.

2. **Immunizations:** All children entering school must be immunized against certain diseases in accordance with criteria established by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. A list of required immunizations are sent with annual registration packets. Children who are not properly immunized must be excluded. Religious and medical exemptions are allowed and are documented in writing with the parent's signature in the child's file. Such documentation must be provided prior to the child's first day of school.

3. **Physicals:** Evidence of a physical exam conducted by the child's personal physician that has taken place within the last 12 months by a licensed physician must be provided for record keeping. Throughout the year, exams expire and we require new ones.

Proof of a physical examination is required at least 30 days prior to, or within two weeks after admission to the Preschool, and must include a screening for lead poisoning. Postural screenings, or motor evaluations are typically conducted by the child's physician during the annual physical exam.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education requires that each child have a physical examination annually thereafter. Please fill out the Health Form that you received in your packet of forms. Have your physician complete the form and return to the preschool. Your physician may mail the form directly to the Preschool if you wish.

4. **Dental and Visual Exams:** Dental and visual examinations are required annually. Families should have their child's health provider send results of exams and recommendations for care to the Integrated Preschool Program.

5. **Hearing Screenings:**

Children in the Clarke Integrated Preschool Program who have documented sensorineural hearing impairments have a managing audiologist who provides routine audiological evaluations twice per academic year. Parents are required to provide documentation that visual and dental evaluations have been completed prior to a child's enrollment in the program.

If a child demonstrates behavioral changes which suggest a lag in the developmental process, he or she would be referred for further diagnostic evaluation. For example, if a child's fine motor abilities plateau during the

year, evidenced by documentation by his or her teachers, the parents would be referred to their physician, and/or school district for an occupational therapy or fine motor skills evaluation. Parents of preschool children with typical enrolled at Clarke may request a one-time free hearing screening through the Clarke Hearing Center (if interested, parents should notify the Early Childhood Director).

3. **Reporting illnesses:** The occurrence of certain diseases are required by law to be reported to the local Board of Health by the person making the diagnosis. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health list of reportable diseases can be found in the Health and Safety in Child Care manual. The reportable diseases should be reported by telephone or in writing immediately, but in no case exceeded by 24 hours.

a. Clarke Integrated Preschool would report an **outbreak** of a suspected infectious disease (more than three children or staff with the same disease symptoms).

b. **Notification of Communicable Diseases: Parents will receive written notice in your child's backpack, or through the mail if there is a student or staff member who has a reported communicable disease. For infected persons, a physician's note is required to return to school. The local Board of Health is notified if necessary.**

4. **Exclude/Isolating a sick child:** Control of communicable illness among children is a prime concern. Policies and guidelines related to outbreaks of communicable illness at Clarke Integrated Preschool have been developed in conformance with regulations and recommendations set by the Division of Communicable Disease Control, Department of Public Health.

**Parents will be notified by letter, or telephone, when any communicable disease, such as chickenpox or salmonella, has been introduced to the school.**

With advance planning, an informed staff, and cooperation from parents, we can minimize the spread of infectious disease. Parents are asked to be watchful for signs of infectious disease; to call us when their child is ill; to call us when a specific diagnosis is made (i.e., strep throat); to tell us immediately if a diagnosis of Hib or meningococcal disease is made; to inform us of any changes in emergency telephone numbers.

5. **The Clarke School is a smoke and tobacco-free facility.** There is no smoking allowed on the premises.

6. **Protection from exposure to allergens:** The school shall take reasonable precautions to protect children with known allergies, as identified by their physician, from exposure to foods, chemicals or other known allergens. For example, when a child has a peanut, fish or other food allergy, parents should notify the director immediately. The consulting nurse will be notified, and if special precautions and/or medication is necessary for emergency situations (e.g. an epi-pen), a doctor's order would be necessary. The school will send notification to all parents asking them to avoid sending those foods in packed lunches. Staff are notified as soon as information is received regarding known allergies, and individual risks are posted discreetly inside food storage cabinets. Snack products that may contain known allergens are either not ordered, or are clearly labeled and shelved separately. Children are supervised during lunch, and sharing foods is not allowed.

#### **PLAN FOR ADMINISTERING MEDICATION (DESE Criteria 16.5)**

**As a general policy, NO prescription or non-prescription medication may be administered to children at the Clarke Integrated Preschool Program. Parents are asked to plan to give their child any necessary prescription medications at home before and/or after school.**

**Should it become necessary for prescription medication to be administered at school, we follow the policy outlined below:**

1. The parent must contact the Clarke Integrated Preschool for the necessary permission forms (which are also provided in registration packets).

2. Clarke Integrated Preschool requires a doctor's note, a signed permission slip, and all medication must be in its original, clearly-labeled prescription bottle with the child's name, name of drug, and directions to consider administration of medications at school. In the unusual circumstance in which a child requires medication to be administered during school hours, the Integrated Preschool will ensure that **at least two staff members are trained annually by an R.N. in medication delegation procedures.**
3. A medication administration log will be kept to document the name of the person administering the medication, time and date the drug was administered, and report of any unusual reactions. The log is kept on the original permission slip and placed in the child's medical file. Each time medication is administered the information will be logged.
4. The medication will remain in a locked drawer or box in the early childhood office, and any unused medication will be returned directly to the parent. If the medication requires refrigeration then it will be placed in the refrigerator in a locked box.
5. Students who require use of an epinephrine auto injector (epi-pen) for an allergic reaction must also have a physician's written order. Epi-pens will be kept on top of the students' cubbie in the preschool hallway, in a locked box and easily accessible to adults only. They will be clearly marked with the child's allergy plan with it.
6. School staff will not administer the first dose of any medication unless in an unusual situation and only with parental consent.
7. All medications, whether prescription or non-prescription, will be administered in accordance with the consent and document requirements.
8. Any change of medication or dosage must be authorized by a new order from a physician.

Should it become necessary for a child to receive a **topical, non-prescription medication** at school, the following procedures will be taken:

1. The parent must give written authorization. We will also provide the parent with a permission slip, and a signed copy of which will be placed in the child's file.
2. The medication must be in its original, clearly-labeled container, including directions. It must also be marked with the child's name. It may only be used for the child to whom it belongs.
3. A log of the person administering the medication and the time and date the drug was administered is kept on the original permission slip. Each time the medication is administered the information will be logged.
4. The medication will remain in a locked box in the preschool office or classroom, and any unused medication will be returned directly to the parent. If the medication requires refrigeration then it will be placed in the refrigerator in the kitchen in a locked box.
5. If a student has a diaper rash and a staff person administers a diaper rash cream, the parents will be notified at the end of the day.

### **PLANS FOR EVACUATION OF CENTER IN EMERGENCY** (posted at each exit)

Clarke Northampton Integrated Preschool practices fire drills 4 times per year, and lockdown drills at least two times per year. A contingency evacuation plan is in also in place and practiced 2 times per year to prepare for the unlikely necessity to evacuate due to fire, natural disaster, loss of power, heat or hot water or other emergency situation. Clarke School is on the Town of Northampton Emergency Notification list and receives automated phone calls and email alerts to the Administrative Assistant and the Director's office, as well as the Business Manager and President's Office, regarding any local, regional or national emergencies. (To add your contact to the automated contact system, go to the website; ([northamptonmassachusetts.gov](http://northamptonmassachusetts.gov)) and follow links for emergency preparedness notifications on the home page).

The school will follow instructions from local authorities regarding the need to evacuate, to shelter in place, or to take other precautionary action. The safety and well-being of the children is the primary concern and, in the absence of guidance from local authorities, the emergency evacuation and parent notification plan will be implemented if the Director determines that the environment is not safe.

An **emergency evacuation plan** is in place and practiced twice yearly following a fire drill. In the case of necessary evacuation, all persons on campus are directed to proceed to the **Helen Hills Hills Chapel (123 Elm Street Northampton, MA 01063 (413) 585-2750) at the southwest end of Round Hill Road.**

**FIRE DRILLS** include the following procedures: At the sound and sight of the fire alarm and flashing lights,

**Teacher-in-charge:**

- Take attendance sheet and completed emergency form on each child
- Take first aid kit
- Evacuate children
- Take roll call when children are safely outside

**Second Teacher:**

- Call 911, if applicable
- Check rooms for hiding children
- Close windows
- Turn out lights
- Close doors
- Escort children out and away from the building to the designated waiting area

**Additional Teachers:**

- Check observation booths and bathrooms for visitors.
- Assist with children.

**The teachers and children are accounted for at the designated meeting area in front of Tilly House (the Business Office). Fire drills are timed and reported to the local fire department.**

In the event the **school needs to be evacuated** due to a natural disaster, the loss of power, heat or water in the school building, the above will be followed as in a fire drill

**EVACUATION:** In an evacuation, the teachers and children will remain at the designated meeting area in front of Tilly House, and **proceed to the Helen Hills Hills Chapel (123 Elm Street, Northampton 01063)** when and if directed. Children and staff will remain at the evacuation site until When the school has been cleared for reentry, or if reentry is not possible, until the child's parent/guardian has been called to pick-up their child.



## PARENT PARTICIPATION

### General Communication and Messages

The number for the main Reception Desk at Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech is **413-584-3450**. You may call this number at any time throughout the day to get messages to the preschool.

You can also call the Early Childhood Department directly by calling the Office Manager at **413-582-1116** between 7:00-9:00 a.m. or 2:00-3:00p.m. Messages at this number are checked throughout the day.

The best time to talk to a teacher on the telephone is from 8:00-8:20, 11:30 - 12:30, or 2:30-3:30 p.m. If you need to talk to a teacher before class begins, call between 8:00 - 8:20 at 582-1116. Email messages may be sent to individuals by using the following addresses: first initial and last name @clarkeschools.org (for example, [mhartblay@clarkeschools.org](mailto:mhartblay@clarkeschools.org)).

On Fridays, "**The Preschool Post**" (a weekly newsletter) will be sent home with your child. This will contain notices and reminders, and a description of classroom activities and lessons for the past and upcoming week. The words for the songs, finger plays, or poems children are learning will be included, and parents are encouraged to carryover this information with the child. The Preschool Post might contain an illustrated version of the week's activities, intended to be read together as a parent-child activity and put into the child's home-school notebook. Please tell the teacher if you do not receive a parent letter on a Friday. At the beginning of each month you will also receive a calendar highlighting upcoming events.

Other communication, including activities for home carryover and information about your child's day at school, will be placed in your child's **home-school notebook**, which should be sent daily with your child. Teachers will check the notebook daily for messages from home at arrival time. If you have information that is necessary for the teachers to know about your child's day, we encourage you to telephone since teachers may be delayed in reading a note.

Please provide a backpack or school bag that can be used to hold messages/ the home-school notebook and your child's belongings. **Please check your child's backpack daily for messages or other things your child may bring home.**

### Parent Partnerships

We know that children make the best progress in school when there is a strong connection and partnership between home and school. Understanding this, parents are **required** to participate at the Preschool at least once a week, and are welcome to observe as often as you wish. There are many ways to participate: observe, sit in on a focus session with your child, come on a field trip, join a parent workshop, or arrange for other activities with your child's teacher. If you are able to schedule a regular time each week the teaching staff can plan to speak briefly with you during your observation. You will be asked to sign in as a visitor at the main reception area of Bell Hall. The preschool Office Manager will escort you to the observation booth. If you are bringing visitors with you, we ask you to schedule in advance since we often host scheduled observers (i.e. students, teachers, prospective families, or other interested persons) and our observation booths are limited in size.

Observation booths with one-way glass windows are located adjacent to the classrooms and individual "focus" rooms. It is possible to observe without your child being aware of your presence. Often the behavior of a Preschool child changes when he/she knows his/her parents are observing. It's often informative for parents to have an opportunity to observe their child interacting independently in the classroom.

We welcome parents to plan to participate in classroom activities as well. Let the teachers know if you would like to participate!

## **Parent Conferences**

Parents may request a conference at any time, but regular conferences will be scheduled by the teachers following the distribution of Progress Reports to the parents. Team meetings with public school departments are held one time per year (or more if requested).

The preschool teachers want to hear from you often. If there are any changes in your child's life at home, any special events, new accomplishments, stressful situations - anything which might be important to our understanding of your child's moods, feelings, and behaviors, and need for developing language- please let the teachers know. It is especially important that the parents of the children with hearing loss let us know what is happening at home since the children are not always able to communicate about events important to them. A short note of information (such as a visit to a friend's house, making a cake, or going to Grandma's house) would be helpful to the teacher to understand your child better and to provide familiar subjects for conversation.

## **Progress Reports**

Progress reports are provided quarterly for children who have hearing loss; three written reports are provided to parents and the home school system in November, March and June and one verbal report is provided at annual team meetings.

Bi-annual written reports are provided for children who do not have hearing loss in January and June.

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## **OPPORTUNITIES TO MEET OTHER FAMILIES**

### **Parent Group Meetings and Workshops**

We want to facilitate family contact! We sponsor parent meetings (for all parents in our Preschool and Parent-Infant programs) so that you can have the opportunity to meet other families. Meeting times will be as noted on the monthly calendar and in the weekly Preschool Post.

Additionally, we offer workshops for parents that provide opportunities to meet with fellow parents and discuss issues of normal child development, family life, the impact of hearing loss, and general parenting issues and strategies. The parent workshops and group meetings are opportunities for ideas to be exchanged, stories and resources to be shared, special interest topics to be addressed (we can and do arrange for guest speakers), and friendships to form.

Your participation is very important, and expected. Parent meetings are scheduled sometimes as often as weekly, and at least one time per month during preschool hours, and occasionally during evening hours. Child care during parent meetings may be available if requested in advance and time is given to arrange sitters. Childcare is often provided by local teens or graduate students.

**First Days of School** We welcome you to enjoy snacks available in the observation booth for all parents on the first day of school. After you drop off your child come and observe, meet our Director, our Office Manager, and other parents! Soon after the start of the school year we host a social luncheon or picnic so that families have the opportunity to meet and socialize.

**Open House** The classroom teachers plan Open House events two times per year, usually at the end of a school morning in the Fall and Spring. Open House provides an opportunity for the children to take pride in showing families their classroom work and activities. Parents get a closer look at the work children have been involved with, meet your child's peers and their parents. The children typically prepare a song or story to present at Open House, and snacks are available for sharing. We strongly encourage families to attend the Open House events—the children look forward to their family coming.

**Family Holiday Pot-Luck** A potluck luncheon is scheduled from 11:30 - 12:30 on a school day close to our December vacation. Everyone brings a prepared dish at the end of the school morning. The children prepare for a family sing-along to share with parents and visitors. Families in our Parent-Infant Program join us for this event. Parents are free to meet each other and the Preschool staff and enjoy the meal. Siblings and grandparents are welcome to attend.

**Spring Picnic** In early June a potluck picnic is held in the evening at Look Park in Florence for the families of our early childhood/preschool programs and staff. We reserve picnic tables near the playground so the children can enjoy the swings and slides. Even though we don't cook out on the grills, there is always a wide variety of delicious foods, laughs and memories to share.

**Other Events** You will receive notice of campus-wide events throughout the year, and these may include Family weekends, lectures, picnics, family swimming, sporting events, school plays and poetry cafes, appreciation dinners, hearing screenings, fundraisers, conferences, and field trips. Campus wide events are also posted on the website at [www.clarkeschools.org](http://www.clarkeschools.org)

### **Referral Plan**

The staff at the preschool is trained and experienced in early childhood education and specializes in auditory/oral education of the deaf and hard-of-hearing. Our staff consults with other service providers as appropriate. If the staff suspects that a child can benefit from support services not available directly through school staff (e.g. physical therapy, occupational therapy, psychotherapy, etc.), they will contact parents (and the public school system) and request that the child be referred for an evaluation and possible intervention. We also provide referrals to parents who are seeking additional services such as advocacy, family or individual counseling, training, and other resources relevant to your family life. Please ask!

### **The Parent Advisory Group and the Clarke Parent's Conference**

Do you have ideas to share? A desire to get involved in the Clarke community on a larger scale? The purpose and role of the ***Parent Advisory Group*** is to make recommendations to the School Cabinet on matters of education, health, and safety. This is solely an advisory group and suggestions will not necessarily become policy, nor will concerns regarding individual students be discussed. This is a wonderful opportunity for school-wide involvement, and we urge you to consider joining these organizations to represent the early childhood programs at Clarke. We need your input! ***The Parent's Conference*** is a parent-run organization with officers and members who sponsor fundraisers, family activities, staff appreciation and other events. Contact our Director if you need more information!

### **Grievance Policy**

Should the need arise, a formal procedure for registering complaints and grievances is available to parents. Parents are expected to promptly discuss any concerns regarding their child's education and care directly with staff and/or the director of the early childhood program. Complaints and grievances from parents and students regarding students' care may be received orally or in writing. If issues are not resolved in a timely and satisfactory manner, the protocol is to contact in this order; the person's supervisor/department head, the Director, the President.

The person with whom there is a complaint will be notified of the issue. A complaint may be resolved at any level, and in many cases this may be done simply by speaking to the party against whom the complaint is made. This should occur within 24 hours or as soon as the party involved can be contacted. The complaint will be documented as well as its resolution. The person filing the complaint will be notified of the decision/results within 24 hours of that decision. Results of the decision may be verbal and/or written to the person(s) filing the complaint.

In cases of more serious complaints or grievances, the Director in conjunction with the department head will begin investigation of the complaint or grievance within 24 hours of its receipt. There will be written documentation of



the complaint. The person against whom the complaint is made will be notified. Documentation will be kept of all conversations/interviews.

Results of the decision may be verbal and/or written to the person(s) filing the grievance. Written documentation will be maintained. Specific action regarding any Clarke employee will be kept confidential. In all cases the President is the final arbitrator.

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### **RESEARCH, FUND RAISING, PUBLICITY and OBSERVATION POLICY**

1. **Research:** The CLARKE School occasionally conducts research, and from time to time we participate in research projects with other institutions. Whenever we are involved in a research project we will give you information regarding the project and seek your permission for your child's participation.
2. **Data Collection:** The preschool is a member of the Option Schools, a coalition of private schools across the U.S., Canada and England that emphasizes listening and spoken language as they work with children and families impacted by hearing loss. Because information about how children progress in listening and spoken language programs is not widely available, the Option Schools have worked to address this issue in recent years. The Listening and Spoken Language Data Repository (LSL-DR) gives Option and its individual school members a tool to gather information while protecting the privacy of each child and family. We collect demographic information, audiological information, and information about speech, language and vocabulary development. Data from each of our five campuses is entered into the repository on an annual basis. *No personal information is shared.*
3. **Fund Raising and Publicity:** The school has a Development Office which conducts fund raising and publicity for the school. If you sign the Release and Consent form when your child is enrolled, the Development Office will have permission to use your child's photograph for these purposes. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this policy, please feel free to contact us.



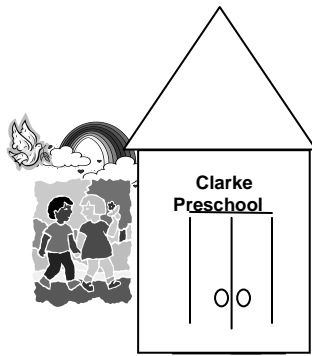
### **TUITION AND BILLING**

The Business Office at Clarke handles all billing for the Preschool. The cost and billing procedure differs for children who are placed in the school for deaf and hard-of hearing services vs. a private placement without special education services. Most children who receive services related to special needs are placed in the preschool through their hometown school district, although families may also pay private tuition. In general, however, it is the school system which places a child with hearing loss in the preschool program after an extensive process of evaluation and educational team meetings. The school system assumes responsibility for tuition payment and transportation.

Parents of children with typical hearing place their children in the preschool privately and pay tuition. They also are responsible for transporting their child to and from the program. Scholarship is not available for hearing peers, but the tuition is competitively attractive. The Business Office, however, will send a statement in the mail bi-annually. A non-refundable deposit, which is applied to the tuition fee, is required to hold your child's place for entrance.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY of Records**

With a few exceptions, no individual or organizations but the parents, students, and school personnel working directly with the student are allowed to have access to information in the student record without the specific, informed written consent of the parent or the student. A log of access is kept as part of each student's record. Preschool records may be reviewed by personnel in the Clarke elementary school as students transfer to the kindergarten. College interns may view records under the direction of the preschool supervisor.



**The Integrated Preschool Program**  
**Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech**  
**Northampton, Massachusetts**

**Directory**

(REMEMBER) You may leave a message any time of day; calls will be directed to voicemail if not answered.

**Clarke Main Reception.... 413-584-3450**

**The Early Childhood Office.... 413-582-1116**

**Preschool Staff:**

**Marian Hartblay, Director of Early Childhood.... 413-582-1144**

**Maureen Uhlig, Office Manager.... 413-582-1116**

**Janice Gatty.... 413-582-1120**

**Messages to teachers... 413-582-1116**

- Penny Gill
- Meagan Benoit
- Jeanne Moriarty
- Amanda Hernandez

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**Clarke Hearing Center ... 413-582-1114**

**Clarke K-8 Program at Leeds Elementary School ... 413-387-1700**

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**Email addresses at Clarke School:**

**[First initial last name@clarkeschools.org](mailto:First initial last name@clarkeschools.org)**

**For example: [mhartblay@clarkeschools.org](mailto:mhartblay@clarkeschools.org)**

**Visit the Clarke website at: [www.clarkeschools.org](http://www.clarkeschools.org)**

**"Friend" us on Facebook!**

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